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ABSTRACT

This survey was designed to measure the experiences of teachers who have recently completed their first year of teaching in public schools. It includes questions on their experiences in relation to students, administrators, other teachers, and parents. The report marks the completion of a two-part survey of new teachers. A first survey was conducted during the summer of 1990 to measure the expectations of graduates from teaching schools immediately prior to their first year of teaching in public schools. The current survey focuses on comparing how these teachers' experience in their first year of teaching has affected their attitudes, and how the actual experience of teaching compares with their prior expectations as measured by the first survey. A total of 1,007 teachers were interviewed by telephone. Ten tables display responses with respect to: expectations vs. experiences regarding themselves, their students, principals, the status and dedication of teachers, parents, the need for school-based social services; teacher preparation; and aids to becoming a more effective teacher. The survey questionnaire showing the marginal frequency for all questions appears in the appendix. (LL)

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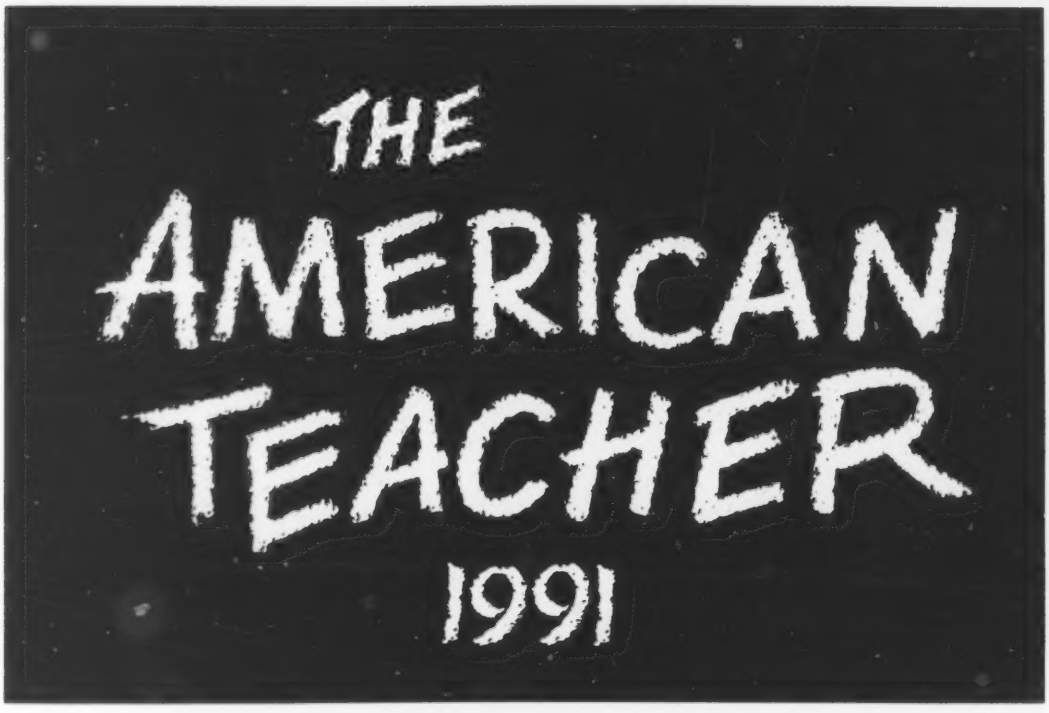
The Metropolitan Life Survey of



THE FIRST YEAR:

New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals

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MetLife

Surveys in this Series

The present report is part of a series of surveys, representing a sustained program of research that brings teachers' opinions to the attention of the American public and policymakers.

First in the series is *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher*, released in 1984. This first comprehensive report on the attitudes of elementary and secondary school teachers toward public education in the United States measures and analyzes teachers' attitudes about educational reform. It reveals just how much teachers themselves are open to change and are willing to be an integral part of the reform process itself.

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1985: Strengthening the Profession examines teachers' own agenda for educational reform, and reports what classroom teachers across the nation think is necessary to strengthen the teaching profession and attract and retain good teachers.

Next in the series is *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1986: Restructuring the Teaching Profession*. This survey explores the current structure of the teaching profession, as well as ways to restructure it. The project surveys virtually every level of educational leadership across the country. It reports the views of individual teachers, of school principals and district superintendents, of state legislators, of commissioners of education, of governors' aides who deal with education, and of teacher union officers and deans of education. The survey offers a comprehensive perspective–from the ground up–of the issues facing the teaching profession and of specific reforms that generate consensus or disagreement.

The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America was also released in 1986. This report is based on a survey of former teachers–the first such survey nationwide. It measures and compares the views of those who left the teaching profession to work in some other occupation.

With *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1987: Strengthening Links Between Home and School*, the scope of the series is expanded to include the views of parents of America's schoolchildren. As the study shows, two groups have stood united in their commitment to educating America's youth–parents and teachers.

The 1988 contribution to the series, *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1988: Strengthening the Relationship Between Teachers and Students*, surveys the school environment, the student-teacher relationship, and the teaching and learning process, and includes the views of students in grades 4–12. An additional focus of this survey is minority teachers' satisfaction with teaching and ways to increase their participation in the teaching profession.

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1989: Preparing Schools for the 1990s, looks back at the changes in education through the decade now ending, and looks ahead to the changes teachers say would improve education and help them do their jobs better. This survey examines school reforms, accountability, the teaching career, the societal problems teachers face in their classroom, and teachers' plans, hopes and level of optimism about the future.

The series also includes several reports on individual states–two surveys of California teachers and one of New York teachers–whose questions parallel the 1984 and 1985 nationwide studies.

In 1990 and 1991, the series introduced two new elements. The first of these new features is a mini-survey on urgent issues. *Coming to Terms–Teachers' Views on Current Issues in Education* introduced the mini-surveys with questions on emerging problems related to tightened school budgets. A second mini-survey is planned for fall 1991. The other new feature introduced is reflected in the current publication: a report on a two-part survey of new teachers before and after their first year in the classroom (fall 1990 and spring 1991). These four reports constitute the 1990 and 1991 editions of the *Survey*.

The Metropolitan Life Survey of

THE AMERICAN TEACHER 1991

THE FIRST YEAR:

New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals

A Survey of New Teachers Who Completed Their First Year of Teaching in Public Schools in 1991

Conducted for
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
by
Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

Project Directors:
Humphrey Taylor, *President*
Robert Leitman, *Senior Vice President*

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Fieldwork: July–August 1990 and April–May 1991

FOREWORD FROM METROPOLITAN LIFE

The *Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1989* examined teachers' assessments of nearly a decade of education reform. Highlighting the theme "Preparing Schools for the 1990s," the survey also queried teachers on their expectations about the decade ahead. In order to sharpen the focus on emerging trends for the '90s, we have commissioned Louis Harris and Associates to conduct a two-part survey of those who are, perhaps, closest to the cutting edge in education: new teachers. Spring 1990 graduates of teacher preparation programs, these first-time teachers entered classrooms nationwide in the fall of 1990. The initial installment of the current survey captured their attitudes on several key issues just as they commenced their teaching career. In spring 1991, we returned to this cohort of new teachers to gauge their attitudes as they concluded their first year in the classroom.

Our goal since we began this series in 1984 has been to provide a forum for the teacher's voice on major education issues. Over the years, respondents have identified key concerns in education improvement. And from the outset, teachers have made it clear that most join the profession—and stick it out—for one reason above all others: *teachers love to teach.* Even though they recognize the host of problems that continues to beset schools, those who entered the profession in 1990 are, if anything, redoubling that sense of idealism. While disappointments may have set in, and enthusiasms were tempered over the course of their first year, these teachers emerged with their determination intact that they can really make a difference.

Clearly, this is exciting news, matched by the excitement about teaching that appears to be building throughout America. We invite you to listen to the newest teachers for what they can tell us about the aspirations and concerns they bring to the schools of the 1990s.

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INTRODUCTION

This survey was designed to measure the experiences of teachers who have recently completed their first year of teaching in public schools. It includes questions on their experiences in relation to students, administrators, other teachers, and parents.

The report marks the completion of a two-part survey of new teachers. A first survey was conducted during the summer of 1990 to measure the expectations of graduates from teaching schools immediately prior to their first year of teaching in public schools.

The current report focuses on comparing how these teachers' experience in their first year of teaching has affected their attitudes, and how the actual experience of teaching compares with their prior expectations as measured by the first survey.

The Survey Design

A total of 1,007 teachers who completed their first year of teaching in the public schools in spring 1991 were surveyed. The sample was designed to be representative of all new teachers in the public schools who:

a. Graduated from teaching colleges in 1990 and

b. taught for the first time in a public school in the 1990–1991 school year.

The sample was drawn from lists of 1990 graduates from a probability sample of colleges listed by the *American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education*. Graduates who did not teach full-time in public schools in 1990–1991 were excluded from the sample.

Nearly three quarters of this sample (719) were among the original panel of 1,002 graduates from teaching schools interviewed for the first survey, while the remaining 288 were selected in the same manner as the original panel. Those members of the original panel who could not be included in this sample either did not end up teaching in a public school in 1990–1991 or were unavailable.

Initial interviews were conducted by telephone in July and August 1990. All follow-up interviews were conducted by telephone in April and May 1991. The survey questionnaire showing the marginal frequency for all questions appears in the Appendix.

A Note on Reading the Tables

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (–) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to totals, or to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents. The base for each question is the total answering that question. The base for all tables is 1,007 new teachers.

Wave 1 refers to the responses collected during summer 1990 for the initial survey of beginning teachers. Wave 2 refers to the spring 1991 survey of teachers who completed their first year of teaching in public schools.

Possible Sampling Error

It is customary with a probability sample of 1,000 to write that "this survey has a possible sampling error of +/-3%." However, this is a somewhat misleading statement because in any survey there is a small possibility that measurement errors are substantially greater than this, and there is no way to calculate the probabilities of errors arising from factors such as human error, non-response, interviewer bias or respondents who do not understand the questions.

Public Release of Survey Findings

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from this survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is also available, rather than simply excerpt from the survey findings.

Project Responsibility

The director of the project at Louis Harris and Associates was Robert Leitman, Senior Vice President. He worked under the overall supervision of Humphrey Taylor, President.

Louis Harris and Associates gratefully acknowledges the contributions of many individuals to this project. Our colleagues at Metropolitan Life, in particular, played a key role in the design and analysis of the data. However, responsibility for the survey questions, the findings, and their interpretation rests solely with Louis Harris and Associates.

THE SURVEY FINDINGS

1. Expectations vs. Experiences Regarding Themselves and Their Students

Virtually all new teachers believe that all children can learn. Before beginning their teaching career, 93% agreed strongly with this statement, while 88% felt the same way after spending a year in the public school system.

The experience of teaching in public schools seems to have had a more negative impact on these teachers' conviction that they "can really make a difference in the lives of their students." After one year of teaching, only two-thirds of these "experienced" new teachers (68%) strongly agree with this statement, representing a significant drop from the 83% of teachers who strongly agreed before beginning their teaching career.

One reason for teachers' decreased strength of belief in their own efficacy is the increased perception that "many children come to school with so many problems that it's very difficult for them to be good students." The proportion of teachers strongly agreeing with this statement has increased from 28% of those who were about to begin teaching to a much higher 47% after completing their first year of teaching (Table 1-1).

Before beginning their first teaching job, white teachers were twice as likely as blacks or Hispanics to agree strongly that many children come to school with so many problems that it's very difficult for them to be good students. After one year of teaching experience, black and Hispanic teachers are just as likely to agree strongly with this statement.

Also, before beginning teaching, teachers assigned to schools in different types of locations were nearly equally likely to agree strongly with this statement. After acquiring some experience, teachers who work in the inner city, small towns and rural areas are more likely than those who teach in other urban and (especially) suburban areas to cite the interference of outside problems in their students' educational process.

Not surprisingly, teachers of low income and minority students are more likely than teachers of more privileged students to believe that family and other outside problems present significant barriers to their students' education. Those who teach high school are also more likely than teachers of younger children to believe this (Table 1-2).

The net effect of these changed perceptions is a shift in the percentage who believe that "even the best teachers will find it difficult to really teach more than two-thirds of their students." Prior to their first year of teaching, only a minority of 45% accepted this view. The sobering effect of one year of teaching experience has resulted in a 58% majority now agreeing with this statement (Table 1-1).

As with the issue of family problems interfering with the educational process, teachers of primarily low income students are more likely than those teaching more advantaged students to believe that it will be difficult for even the most qualified teachers to really teach more than two-thirds of their students. However, the proportion of minority students has relatively little impact on teachers' belief in their ability to really teach more than two-thirds of their students.

Before starting their first job, teachers of different races viewed this issue relatively similarly. After gaining teaching experience, a higher proportion of black and Hispanic teachers than whites agree with this statement (Table 1-3).

OBSERVATION: *Overall, the first year of teaching appears to have had a more negative impact on the expectations of minority teachers than on white teachers' expectations. Other differences may be exaggerated because of a relatively small sample of minority teachers.*

Nonetheless, overwhelmingly, teachers still feel that they individually have a positive role in students' lives. An unchanged 89% of teachers continue to agree that if they do their job well, "their students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions" (Table 1-1).

OBSERVATION: *Taken together, this set of responses may indicate that a year of teaching experience only slightly reduces teachers' faith in their ability to teach and students' ability to learn, but more significantly reduces teachers' belief that these classroom experiences will have as great an impact on their students' lives.*

Table 1-1

NEW TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS VS. EXPERIENCES: FOR THEMSELVES; FOR THEIR STUDENTS

WAVE 1

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Based on your experiences in your school this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

	AGREE STRONGLY		SOMEWHAT AGREE		SOMEWHAT DISAGREE		DISAGREE STRONGLY		TOTAL AGREE		TOTAL DISAGREE	
WAVE	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Base Wave 1: 1,002 Base Wave 2: 1,007	PERCENTAGE											
All children can learn	93	88	6	10	*	1	*	*	99	98	1	2
I can really make a difference in the lives of my students	83	68	16	30	1	1	*	*	99	98	1	2
If I do my job well, my students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions	42	43	47	46	10	9	1	2	89	89	10	11
Many children come to school with so many problems that it's very difficult for them to be good students	28	47	47	42	18	8	6	3	75	89	25	11
Even the best teachers will find it difficult to really teach more than two-thirds of their students	8	14	38	44	39	30	15	11	45	58	54	41

*Less than 0.5%

Table 1-2

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL-READINESS

WAVE 1

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Based on your experiences in your school this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

	Base		Proportion Who Agree Strongly That "Many Children Come To School With So Many Problems That It's Very Difficult For Them To Be Good Students."	
	WAVE 1	WAVE 2	WAVE 1	WAVE 2
TOTAL	**1002**	**1007**	**28**	**47**
			PERCENTAGE	
Teacher's Race				
White	936	925	29	47
Black or Hispanic	66	82	15	50
School Location				
Inner City	108	118	30	53
Urban	137	129	30	45
Suburban	306	274	27	40
Small Town	276	282	27	50
Rural	146	186	30	52
Proportion of Low Income Students				
All or Many	241	322	38	57
Some	434	427	27	46
A Few or None	203	177	25	34
Proportion of Minority Students				
All or Many	260	291	37	55
Some	320	297	26	44
A Few or None	348	372	26	45
School Type				
Elementary	565	595	23	44
Junior High/Middle	156	167	34	47
High	217	191	37	55
Both Junior and High	38	36	22	50

Table 1-3

What Portion of Students Can Teachers Reach?

WAVE 1

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Based on your experiences in your school this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

	Base		Proportion Who Agree That "Even The Best Teachers Will Find It Difficult To Really Teach More Than Two-Thirds Of Their Students."	
	WAVE 1	WAVE 2	WAVE 1	WAVE 2
TOTAL	1002	1007	45	58
			PERCENTAGE	
Teacher's Race				
White	936	925	45	57
Black or Hispanic	66	82	50	72
Proportion of Low Income Students				
All or Many	241	322	47	67
Some	434	427	47	56
A Few or None	205	177	44	51
Proportion of Minority Students				
All or Many	260	291	52	62
Some	320	297	42	58
A Few or None	348	372	46	56

2. Expectations vs. Experiences Regarding Principals and the Status and Dedication of Teachers

A shift in attitudes resulting from classroom exposure is also evident regarding new teachers' perception of the principal's role in creating a good learning environment. While virtually all teachers embarking on their first year of teaching (98%) expected that the principal of their school would create a positive environment for learning, a lower 87% of teachers agreed that this had been their experience in their first year of teaching. The major shift is in strength of agreement—73% strongly held this expectation, while only 58% strongly agree that their expectation was met.

On the subject of teachers' dedication, new teachers' experience somewhat exceeded their expectations. Both before and after their first teaching experience, nine in ten teachers believe that most teachers are dedicated to their work. After one year of teaching, 35% of teachers strongly believe in this dedication—up from 30% immediately prior to teaching.

On a somewhat negative note, one year of teaching experience appears to have little effect on teachers' perception that society does not respect the teaching profession. Before beginning their first job, 40% of teachers believed that teachers are not respected in today's society. After completing a year of teaching this figure is 43% (Table 2).

OBSERVATION: *The (relatively small) change over one year in the responses to these questions suggest a slightly heightened belief in and identification with their colleagues and a somewhat increased concern that principals and society at large are not providing enough support.*

Table 2

EXPECTATIONS OF PRINCIPALS AND FOR TEACHERS' STATUS AND DEDICATION

WAVE 1

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about school administrators and teachers. Please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about school administrators and teachers. Based on your experiences in your school this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

	AGREE STRONGLY		SOMEWHAT AGREE		SOMEWHAT DISAGREE		DISAGREE STRONGLY		TOTAL AGREE		TOTAL DISAGREE	
WAVE	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Base Wave 1: 1,002 Base Wave 2: 1,007	PERCENTAGE											
WAVE 1: I expect that the principal of my school will create an environment which will help my students learn	73	N/A	24	N/A	2	N/A	-	N/A	98	N/A	2	N/A
WAVE 2: The principal of my school creates an environment which helps my students learn	N/A	58	N/A	29	N/A	9	N/A	3	N/A	87	N/A	12
Most teachers are dedicated to their work	30	35	60	56	9	8	1	1	90	91	10	9
Teachers are respected in today's society	7	6	53	50	31	32	9	11	60	57	40	43

N/A = Not Asked

3. Expectations vs. Experiences Regarding Parents and the Need For School-Based Social Services

The experience of teaching seems to have only marginally diminished new teachers' faith in the need to work with parents in the educational process. Virtually all new teachers agree that "effective teachers need to be able to work well with their students' parents," and the proportion who feel this strongly remains very high, dropping from 91% prior to one year's teaching experience to 85% once they had gained this experience.

Teaching experience seems to have had virtually no impact on the large majority of teachers who believe that "too many parents today treat their children's schools and teachers as adversaries." Approximately seventy percent of teachers both before and after their first year of teaching agree with this statement.

Most teachers continue to believe that the school should attempt to deal with health and social problems. Prior to the school year, only 19% of new teachers agreed that a school's job is to teach children and that health and social problems should be addressed by other agencies outside the school—only 25% of those completing their first year of teaching agree (Table 3).

OBSERVATION: *It is somewhat disturbing to find that while virtually all new teachers continue to believe in the importance of working well with parents, an unchanged 70% continue to think that parents view their childrens' schools and teachers as adversaries.*

Table 3

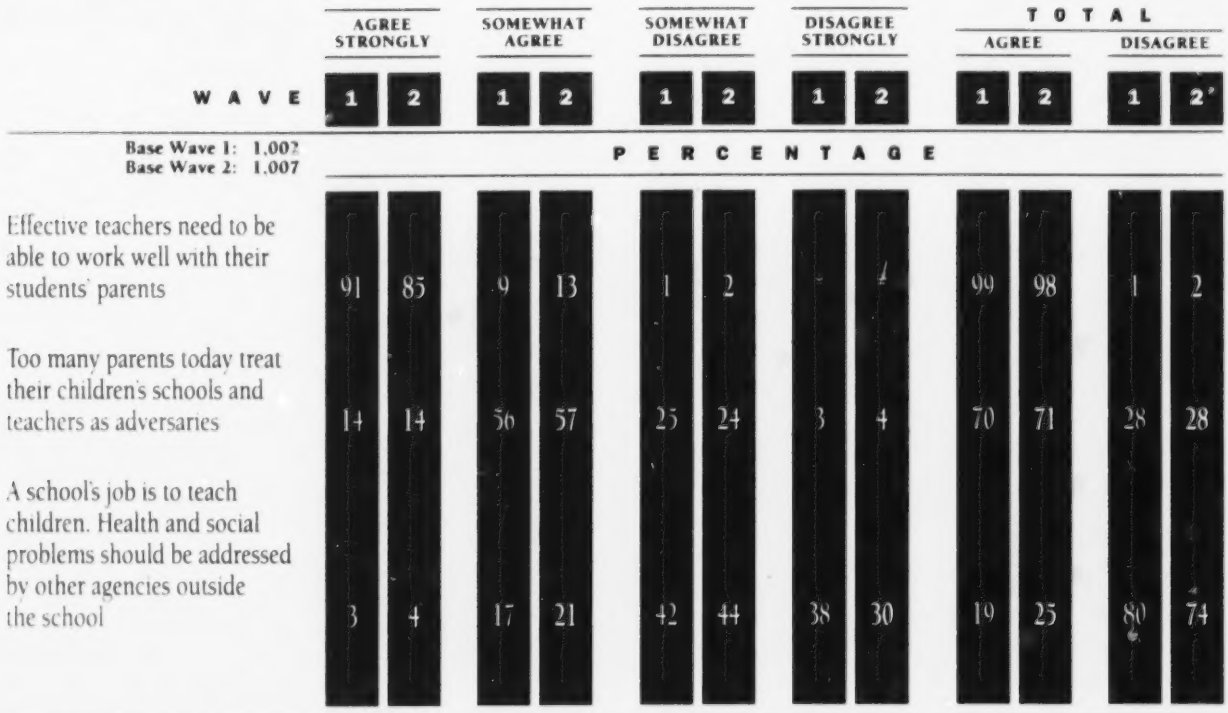
PARENTS, THE COMMUNITY, AND THE NEED FOR SCHOOL-BASED SOCIAL SERVICES

WAVE 1

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about parents and the community. Please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about parents and the community. Based on your experiences in your school this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*



*Less than 0.5%

4. Teacher Preparation

Before spending a year in the classroom, four in five teachers (80%) believed that their training had prepared them to teach students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds—a year later, a much lower 69% of teachers agree. There is an especially large drop in the proportion who agree strongly with this statement, from 42% of those on the eve of their first job to 30% of those completing their first year of teaching.

A somewhat shrinking majority of 57% still support a standard nationalized test for teachers to demonstrate their qualifications, down from 66% of teachers who had not yet begun their teaching careers.

Unchanged by a year of exposure to the public school system is teachers' perception of their need for more practical training before actually beginning their teaching career. About sixty percent of teachers before and after their first year as professionals favor this type of pre-career training (Table 4-1).

Most Important Aspect of Teaching To Helping Students Learn

After acquiring teaching exposure, fewer teachers see instilling self-esteem and personal growth and development as the one aspect of teaching which most helps students learn (73% now vs. 83% before teaching). More teachers now name teaching basic skills (14% vs. 11%) and maintaining order in the classroom (11% vs. 6%) (Table 4-2).

Table 4-1

TEACHER PREPARATION

WAVE 1

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about your training. Please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *I am going to read you a list of statements about your training. Based on your experiences in your school this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.*

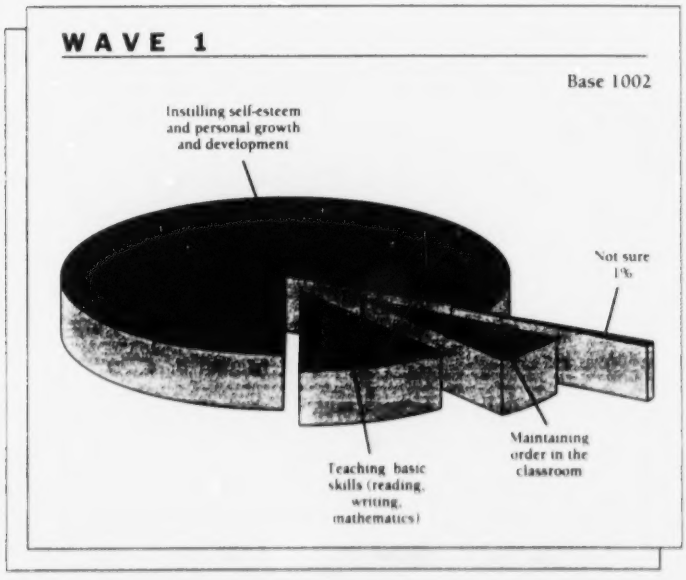
	AGREE STRONGLY		SOMEWHAT AGREE		SOMEWHAT DISAGREE		DISAGREE STRONGLY		TOTAL AGREE		TOTAL DISAGREE	
WAVE	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Base Wave 1: 1,002 Base Wave 2: 1,007	PERCENTAGE											
My training has prepared me to teach students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds	42	30	39	40	15	21	5	9	80	69	20	30
All teachers should take a national, standardized test to demonstrate their qualifications	31	24	35	34	19	23	15	19	66	57	34	42
I wish I had more practical training to be a teacher before I begin to have my own classroom	26	28	32	33	23	25	18	14	58	60	42	39

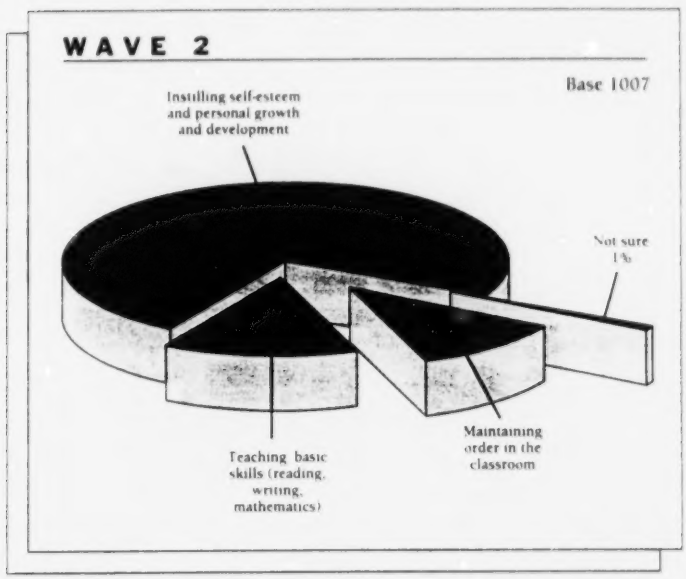
Table 4-2

What Helps Students Learn?

WAVE 1, WAVE 2

QUESTION: *If you had to choose, which one aspect of teaching do you think is most important to helping students learn? Is It (READ LIST)?*


WAVE 1
Base 1002
Instilling self-esteem and personal growth and development
Not sure 1%
Maintaining order in the classroom
Teaching basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics)


WAVE 2
Base 1007
Instilling self-esteem and personal growth and development
Not sure 1%
Maintaining order in the classroom
Teaching basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics)

5. Aids To Becoming A More Effective Teacher

Looking back at their first year as a teacher, nearly half (46%) of these new teachers believe "a skilled experienced teacher assigned to provide you with advice and assistance" would have been most helpful in preparing them to be a more effective teacher; one-third name "more practical training such as a year's internship before having your own class;" and one-fifth favor "better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds" (Table 5-1).

When considering what would now be most helpful in enabling them to become more effective teachers, a majority (51%) of teachers favor "smaller classes and better supplies and educational materials," 27% name "continuous training and support services to deal with the social and other problems that affect your students' ability to get the most out of school," and 22% favor "more opportunities to work cooperatively with other teachers in your school to enhance each other's skills" (Table 5-2).

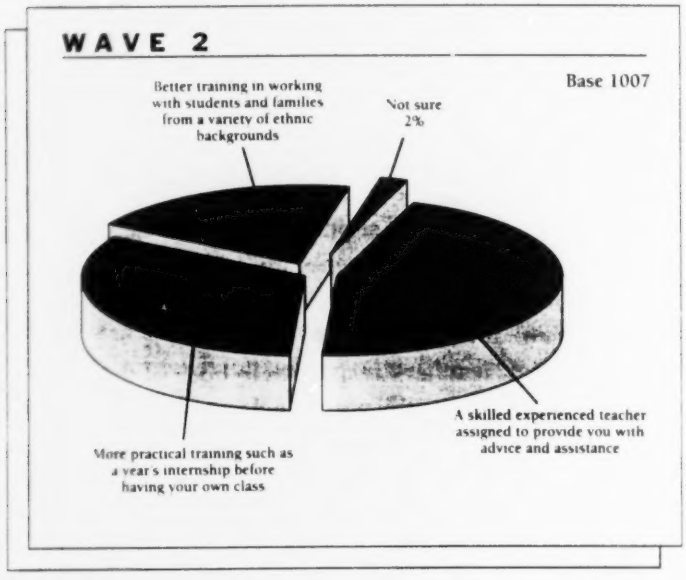
New teachers' responses to both of these questions are remarkably similar to those given by a national cross-section of experienced teachers surveyed earlier this school year as part of the Metropolitan Life series of surveys of the American teacher. (Results are compared in Table 5-1.)

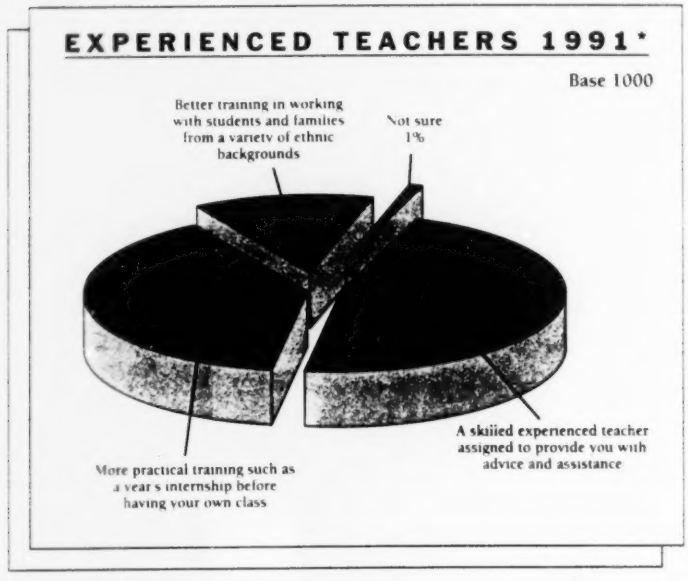
Table 5-1

TEACHER PREPARATION

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *Thinking of your first year as a teacher, which one of the following would have been most helpful in preparing you to be a more effective teacher?*


WAVE 2
Base 1007
Better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds
Not sure 2%
A skilled experienced teacher assigned to provide you with advice and assistance
More practical training such as a year's internship before having your own class


EXPERIENCED TEACHERS 1991*
Base 1000
Better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds
Not sure 1%
A skilled experienced teacher assigned to provide you with advice and assistance
More practical training such as a year's internship before having your own class

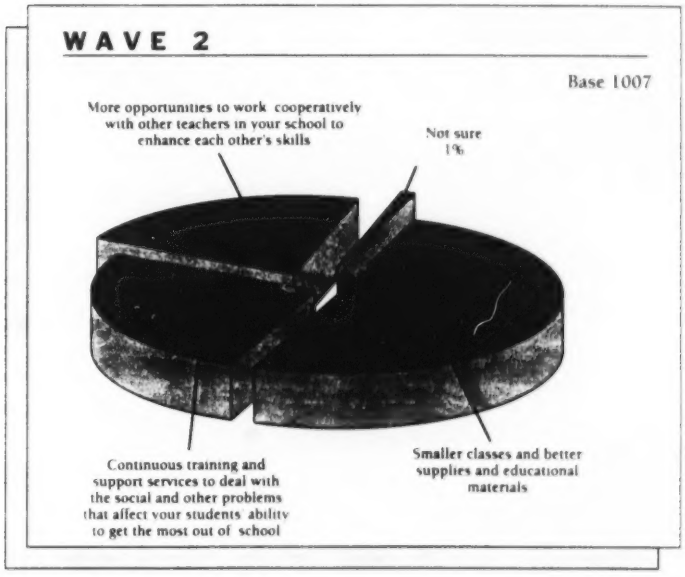
*From *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1991: Coming to Terms–Teachers' Views on Current Issues in Education*

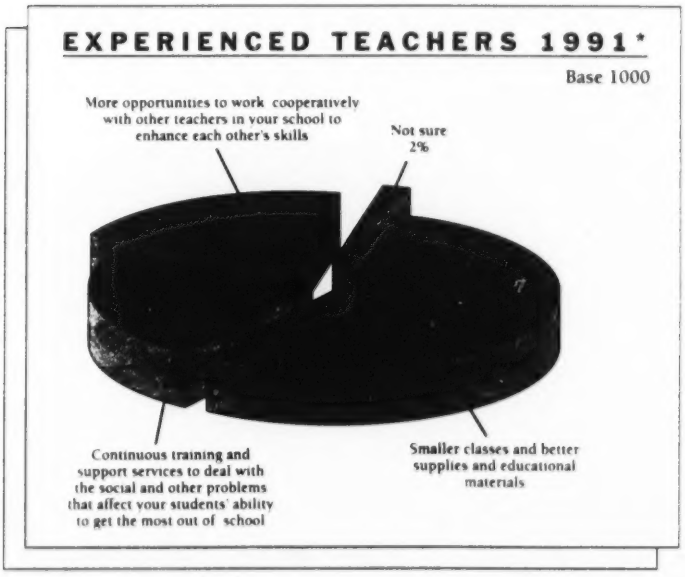
Table 5-2

AIDS TO BECOMING A MORE EFFECTIVE TEACHER

WAVE 2

QUESTION: *Which one of the following would be most helpful to you now in being a more effective teacher?*


WAVE 2
Base 1007
More opportunities to work cooperatively with other teachers in your school to enhance each other's skills
Not sure 1%
Continuous training and support services to deal with the social and other problems that affect your students' ability to get the most out of school
Smaller classes and better supplies and educational materials


EXPERIENCED TEACHERS 1991*
Base 1000
More opportunities to work cooperatively with other teachers in your school to enhance each other's skills
Not sure 2%
Continuous training and support services to deal with the social and other problems that affect your students' ability to get the most out of school
Smaller classes and better supplies and educational materials

*From *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1991: Coming to Terms–Teachers' Views on Current Issues in Education*

6. Future Plans

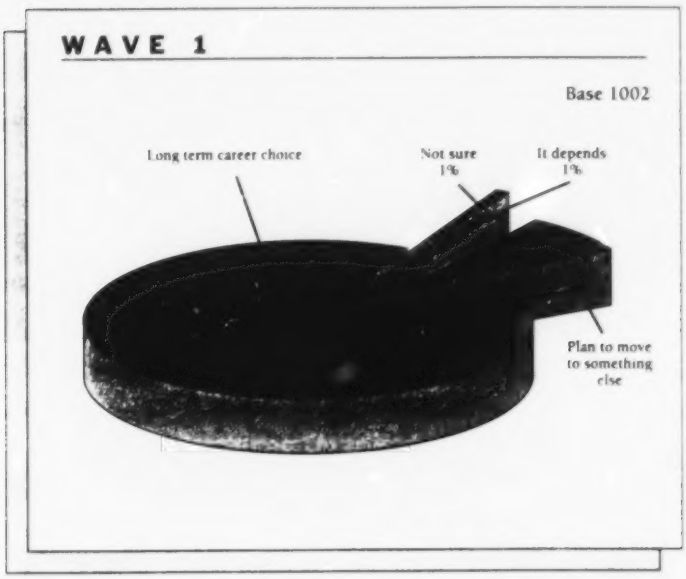
While nine in ten teachers anticipated that teaching would be a long term career choice before starting their first job, after their first year of teaching, a lower 85% agree. This includes 5% of teachers interviewed as part of the original new teachers' panel who have already left teaching (Table 6).

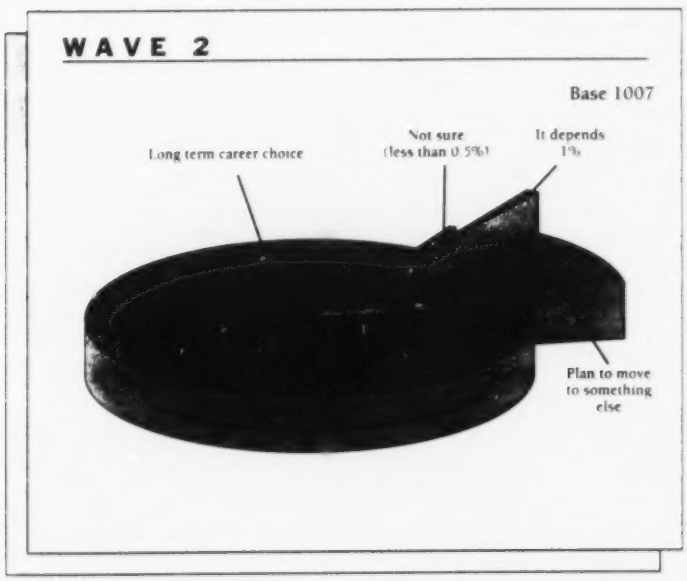
Table 6

FUTURE PLANS

WAVE 1 , WAVE 2

QUESTION: *At this time, do you view teaching as a long term career, or something you expect to do for a few years and then move on to something else?*





Appendix:
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10111

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Questionnaire No.: _____
5 - 6 - 7 - 8

Study No. 912037 (NEW TEACHERS 2)

May 9, 1991

Sample Point No.: | | | | | | | | |
10 - 11 - 12 - 13 - 14 - 15 - 16

Time Started: _____ A.M./P.M.

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Respondent Name: _____
3*(10–45)

Respondent Address: _____
4*(10–45)

_____
4*(46–80)

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
5*(10–55) 5*(56–57) 5*(58–67)

Area Code: _____ Telephone No.: _____
(17–19) (20–26)

Hello, I'm _____from Louis Harris and Associates, the national survey research firm in New York. We are conducting a national survey among new teachers to learn some of the opinions and attitudes about the American educational system, and we would like to ask you a few questions.

FROM OBSERVATION: Respondent Sex

Male.....(27(20-1
Female.....(80-2

A. Expectations of Students

A1. I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Based on your teaching experience this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.

ROTATE—START AT "X"	Agree Strongly	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
( ) a. All children can learn	(29 (88-1	10-2	1-3	*-4	*-5
( ) b. If I do my job well, my students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions	(30 (43-1	46-2	9-3	2-4	*-5
( ) c. Many children come to school with so many problems that it's very difficult for them to be good students	(31 (47-1	42-2	8-3	3-4	*-5
( ) d. Even the best teacher will find it difficult to really teach more than two-thirds of their students	(32 (14-1	44-2	30-3	11-4	1-5
( ) e. I can really make a difference in the lives of my students	(33 (68-1	30-2	1-3	*-4	*-5

B. Expectations Of Administrators and Teachers

B1. I am going to read you a list of statements about school administrators and teachers. Based on your teaching experiences in your school this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.

ROTATE—START AT "X"	Agree Strongly	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
( ) a. The principal of my school creates an environment which helps my students learn	(34 (58-1	29-2	9-3	3-4	1-5
( ) b. Teachers are respected in today's society	(35 (6-1	50-2	32-3	11-4	-5
( ) c. Most teachers are dedicated to their work	(36 (35-1	56-2	8-3	1-4	-5

C. Expectations Of Parents and the Community

C1. I am going to read you a list of statements about parents and the community. Based on this year's experience as a teacher, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.

ROTATE—START AT "X"	Agree Strongly	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
( ) a. Effective teachers need to be able to work well with their students' parents	(37 (85-1	13-2	2-3	*-4	*-5
( ) b. A school's job is to teach children. Health and social problems should be addressed by other agencies outside the school	(38 (4-1	21-2	44-3	30-4	*-5
( ) c. Too many parents today treat their children's schools and teachers as adversaries	(39 (14-1	57-2	24-3	4-4	1-5

D. Teacher Training

D1. The next question will be a list of statements about your training. Given your teaching experiences this year, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree strongly.

ROTATE—START AT "X"	Agree Strongly	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
( ) a. My training has prepared me to teach students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds	(40 (30-1	40-2	21-3	9-4	*-5
( ) b. I wish I had more practical training to be a teacher before I had my own classroom	(41 (28-1	33-2	25-3	14-4	1-5
( ) c. All teachers should take a national, standardized test to demonstrate their qualifications	(42 (24-1	34-2	23-3	19-4	*-5

D2. If you had to choose, which *one* aspect of teaching do you think is *most* important to helping students learn? Is it (READ LIST)? SINGLE RECORD

ROTATE—START AT "X"

( ) a. Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom ... (43 (11-1

OR

( ) b. Teaching basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics). 14-2

OR

( ) c. Instilling self-esteem and personal growth and development 73-3

Not sure 1-4

E. Plans For A Teaching Career

ASK EVERYONE

E1. Thinking of your first year as a teacher, which *one* of the following would have been most helpful in preparing you to be a more effective teacher? Was it (READ LIST)?

ROTATE—START AT "X"

( ) a. A skilled experienced teacher assigned to provide you with advice and assistance (54 (46-1

OR

( ) b. More practical training such as a year's internship before having your own classroom 33-2

OR

( ) c. Better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds 20-3

d. Not sure 2-4

E2. At this time, do you view teaching as a long term career, or something you expect to do for a few years and then move on to something else? (If necessary: If you had to say, based on your current expectations, what do you think?)

Long term career choice	(44 (85-1	
Plan to move to something else	13-2	(ASK Q.E3)
It depends (vol.)	1-3	
No longer teaching (vol.)	--4	(SKIP TO Q.F1)
Not sure	*-5	(ASK Q.E3)

E3. Which *one* of the following would be most helpful to you *now* in being a more effective teacher? Would it be (READ LIST)?

ROTATE—START AT "X"

( ) a. Smaller classes and better supplies and educational materials	(55 (	51-1
OR		
( ) b. Continous training and support services to deal with the social and other problems that affect your students' ability to get the most out of school		27-2
OR		
( ) c. More opportunities to work cooperatively with other teachers in your school to enhance each other's skills		22-3
d. Not sure		1-4

F. Factuals

F1. In the 1990–1991 school year, do/did you teach in an elementary school, a junior high or middle school, or a high school? SINGLE RECORD

Elementary school (Grades K-5 or 6)	(47 (	59-1
Junior high/middle school (Grades 6 or 7–8 or 9)		17-2
High school (Grades 9–12 or 10–12)		19-3
Both junior high and high school		4-4
Not sure		2-5

F2. Is the area where your school is located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

Inner city	(48 (	12-1
Urban		13-2
Suburban		27-3
Small town		28-4
Rural		18-5
Not sure		2-6

F3. How many students in your school come from families whose income is below the average of the community—all of them, many of them, some of them, only a few, or none?

All of them	(49 (	3-1
Many of them		29-2
Some of them		42-3
Only a few		17-4
None of them		*-5
Not sure		8-6

F4. How many students in your school are from minority families—all of them, many of them, some of them, only a few, or none?

All of them	(50 (	4-1
Many of them		25-2
Some of them		29-3
Only a few		33-4
None of them		4-5
Not sure		5-6

F5. Do you consider yourself of Hispanic origin or descent, or not?

Yes, Hispanic	(51 (	5-1
No, not Hispanic		95-2
Not sure		=-3

F6. Do you consider yourself White, Black, Asian, or what?

White	(52 (	94-1
Black		3-2
Asian		1-3
Other		2-4
Not sure		*-5
Refused		*-6

That completes the interview. Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Time Ended: _____ AM/PM

For More Information

Copies of the complete reports of this, and previous reports of the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher are available while in print, by writing to:

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